

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAID, MASS, PFOR, VS

SUBJECT: SENATOR KENNEDY'S LETTER ON INDOCHINA POLICY

FOR AMBASSADOR

1. THERE FOLLOWS IN PARA 2 BELOW TEXT OF MARCH 13 LETTER FROM SENATOR KENNEDY TO THE SECRETARY ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF OUR INDOCHINA POLICY. DEPARTMENT IS PREPARING REPLY AND WOULD WELCOME ANY COMMENTS YOU MIGHT WISH TO MAKE ON ANY PART OF THE INCOMING LETTER. WOULD NEED YOUR INPUTS BY OPENING OF BUSINESS HERE MARCH 21. EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S STUDY MISSION, CITED IN THE LETTER, ARE BEING POUCHED TO YOU.

2. BEGIN TEXT.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY:

AS YOU KNOW, THERE IS CONTINUING AND, I FEEL, GROWING CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC CONCERN OVER THE COURSE OF AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD INDOCHINA. INQUIRY BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND OTHER COMMITTEES OF THE CONGRESS, AN UNCLASSIFIED CABLE OF MARCH 6 FROM AMBASSADOR GRAHAM MARTIN IN SAIGON, OTHER STATEMENTS BY OFFICIALS IN THE EXECUTIVE

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BRANCH, THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION REQUEST FOR THE CUR-

RENT FISCAL YEAR AND THE ANTICIPATED REQUESTS FOR FY 1975,

NEWS DISPATCHES FROM THE FIELD, AND VARIOUS PRIVATE REPORTS, RAISE TROUBLING QUESTIONS FOR MANY AMERICANS OVER THE CHARACTER AND OBJECTIVE OF OUR POLICY TOWARDS INDOCHINA AND OVER THE KINDS AND LEVELS OF OUR CURRENT INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM, CAMBODIA AND LAOS.

IN LIGHT OF THE GROWING CONCERN OVER AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD INDOCHINA AND THE CONTRADICTION AND INCOMPLETE INFORMATION CURRENTLY AVAILABLE, I WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST COMPREHENSIVE COMMENT AND REVIEW ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- 1) THE GENERAL CHARACTER AND OBJECTIVES OF AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD INDOCHINA AS A WHOLE AND TOWARDS EACH GOVERNMENT OR POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN THE AREA;
- 2) THE GENERAL CONTENT AND NATURE OF EXISTING OBLIGATIONS AND COMMITMENTS TO THE GOVERNMENTS IN SAIGON, PHNOM PENH AND VIENTIANE;
- 3) THE KINDS, CATEGORIES AND LEVELS OF SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE GIVEN OR PROJECTED TO THE GOVERNMENTS IN SAIGON, PHNOM PENH AND VIENTIANE FOR FISCAL YEAR 1973 THROUGH 1975 -- INCLUDING (A) A BREAKDOWN OF THE NUMBER, DISTRIBUTION, ACTIVITIES AND AGENCY/DEPARTMENTAL ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL AMERICAN PERSONNEL, AS WELL AS THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH PRIVATE BUSINESS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS UNDER CONTRACT TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT; AND (B) A BREAKDOWN FROM ALL SOURCES OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY ORIENTED ASSISTANCE, GENERAL SUPPORTING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE;
- 4) THE CURRENT STATUS AND PROBLEMS OF REPORTED EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AN INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR GENERAL RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO THE AREA;
- 5) THE CURRENT STATUS AND PROBLEMS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S STATED INTENTION TO ENCOURAGE INTERNATIONALIZING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE AREA;

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- 6) THE CURRENT STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND HANOI ON AMERICAN RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO NORTH VIETNAM;
- 7) THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENTS FOR BOTH VIETNAM AND LAOS;

8) THE DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL SITUATION IN CAMBODIA AND THE POSSIBILITY FOR A CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT; AND

9) RECENT DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES, INVOLVING THE UNITED STATES, AIMED AT A REDUCTION OF VIOLENCE IN INDOCHINA AND A GREATER MEASURE OF NORMALIZATION IN THE AREA.

IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE AREAS OF INQUIRY, I WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE VERY MUCH THE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS ON A SERIES OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN A RECENT REPORT BASED ON THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S STUDY MISSION TO INDOCHINA LAST YEAR. LENGTHY EXCERPTS FROM THIS REPORT, INCLUDING SOME OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS, WERE ISSUED IN LATE JANUARY AND INFORMALLY MADE AVAILABLE TO OFFICIALS IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOCUS ON THE RELIEF AND REHABILITATION OF WAR VICTIMS, BUT ALSO INCLUDE COMMENT AND SUGGESTIONS ON THE BROADER ASPECTS OF UNITED STATES POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN THE AREA.

IN LIGHT OF PERSISTING HOPES AMONG ALL OUR CITIZENS FOR PEACE IN INDOCHINA, AND TO CLARIFY OUR COUNTRY'S COMMITMENTS AND CONTINUING INVOLVEMENT IN THE AREA, I FEEL IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY HELPFUL IF DEFINITIVE INFORMATION ON OUR GOVERNMENT'S POLICY, INVOLVEMENT AND FUTURE PLANNING COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE. I AM HOPEFUL, MR. SECRETARY, THAT THE SUBCOMMITTEE CAN ANTICIPATE A RESPONSE AT AN EARLY DATE, AND THAT APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATIONS OR HEARINGS.

IN CONCLUSION, LET ME EXPRESS MY PERSONAL DISMAY OVER A THEME IN AMBASSADOR MARTIN'S CABLE OF MARCH 6. FOR HIM TO UNCLASSIFIED

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SUGGEST A TIE BETWEEN ALLEGED DECISIONS IN HANOI AND THE VIEWS OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THEIR STAFFS ABOUT THE COURSE OF AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH VIETNAM AND INDOCHINA, IS THE WORST KIND OF INNUENDO AND REGRETABLY IGNORES THE MANY LEGITIMATE QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS OF THE CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE OVER OUR COMMITMENTS TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF INDOCHINA AND OVER THE CONTINUING LEVEL OF OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY CONFRONTATIONS OF THE AREA. AND I WOULD APPRECIATE VERY MUCH YOUR COMMENT ON THE AMBASSADOR'S CABLE.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AND I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU SOON.

SINCERELY,

EDWARD M. KENNEDY
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON REFUGEES

END TEXT. KISSINGER

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